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SUBJECT: JOURNALISTS ACCEPT MONEY FROM DADIS

¶1. Summary: After a story appeared on the website Aminata.com claiming that the President of the CNDD, Dadis Camara, met with several journalists and handed out large sums of money, public affairs staff contacted several journalists to get to the bottom of the story. There are conflicting accounts on why the meeting was called and who received payments, but it is clear that several leading journalists did receive payments of \$2,000 from the junta leader. End summary.

¶2. On April 27, 2009, a group of Guinean journalists met with Captain Dadis Camara at Camp Alpha Yaya. Conflicting reports emerged from this meeting over why it was called and who received payments. One of the participants said that Dadis announced a meeting with private media as early as February but that meeting was cancelled. This meeting was a result of that original communique but was called hastily so not everyone was aware of it. Other sources say the meeting had nothing to do with the February communique but was called by Thierno Bah of Le Dfis newspaper. Another source said Dadis himself called the meeting to talk about the negative coverage he was receiving from some of the press. One reporter who covered the meeting said that a member of l'Association Guineenne des Editeurs de la Presse Independante (AGEPI) who is close to Dadis called the meeting in order to help Dadis get his message out.

¶3. All sources agree that Dadis handed out cash to at least some of the participants in the amount of 10,000,000 Guinean francs each, approximately \$2,000 US. One reason for the conflicting accounts is that Dadis met with the journalists in small groups, so not everyone saw who got the money. Nor is it certain that he delivered the same message. Some sources say that everyone received the money, while others say that the international correspondents and the director of Le Lynx/La Lance refused the money. (Note: The correspondents of BBC, RFI, and West Africa Democracy Radio all say that they left the meeting before the money was handed out and did not receive any money. They have asked Aminata.com to clarify that on the website. Mr. Diallo is out of the country and could not be reached.) Dadis told the journalists present that the money was intended as a gift. According to one source, the average salary of a news director at a newspaper is 7,500,000 GNF, about \$1,500 US a year.

The participating journalists were as follows:

--Thierno Bah, Le Dfis newspaper  
--Mori Fofana, AGEPI (Association of Independent Guinean Press)  
--Moussa Ibn Cont, vice president of AGEPI and Director of La Nouvelle newspaper  
--Souleymane Diallo, Director of Le Lynx/La Lance newspapers  
--Fagnimba Sayon Cond, Director of La Croisade newspaper  
--Hassane Kaba, Director of Le Standard newspaper  
--Gil Mori Cond, l'Enquteur newspaper  
--Baila Bah, La Verit newspaper  
--Alpha Camara, L'Observateur newspaper and Bloomberg correspondent  
--Fidel Momou, Freelance (former Director of L'Enquteur)  
--Aminata Camara, Reporter at Guineeactuelle  
--Goum Mass Daff, Director of Goum Mass Magazine  
--Amadou Diallo, correspondent of BBC Afrique  
--Mouctar Bah, correspondent of RFI/AFP

--Abdourahmane Diallo, Correspondent of West African Democracy

Radio

--Ben Daouda Sylla, Correspondent of Africa #1

¶4. Comment: It is a common practice in Guinea for politicians and officials to pay off journalists and editors to receive positive coverage in their newspapers. Some of the newspapers represented at this meeting had been critical of Dadis after he indicated that he might run for President. What is more disturbing is the presence of so many senior correspondents and some of the more respected Guinean journalists, such as Souleymane Diallo, who has written a book on ethics for Guinean journalists. Even though they may not all have accepted the money, their reputations could be tainted.

¶5. It has been speculated that this could be an attempt to curry favor with the media in case Dadis does decide to run for President. Even though he has stated to the international community that he does not intend to run, he is more ambiguous when dealing with the public. It should also be noted that none of the private radio stations were invited to this meeting. If Dadis wants to curry favor with the media it is odd that he would not include the media that reaches by far the largest audience in Guinea. End comment.

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